

# DJS Health Beat Monthly Circular

## Department of Juvenile Services

### Knowledge is Power: Holiday Stress!

Stress occurs when a situation or multiple demands overwhelm an individual's ability to cope. Individuals display stress in different ways. Some people may even seem like they have no stress at all. It comes down to preparation, planning, setting realistic goals and understanding that you can only control certain factors.

Here are some tips to help you manage the stress: Take good care of yourself. Exercise, eat properly, and get enough sleep. Avoid using alcohol and drugs. Try to have a sense of humor. Take one thing at a time, determine priorities and pace yourself. Be realistic about what you can and can not do. Ask for help when you need it. Know your limits. Say "no" when you need to. Be flexible. Accept that you don't have control over some situations and give in occasionally. Avoid things that make you feel worse.

If you are planning a big holiday with family and friends, ask for

help. Everyone wants to feel like they have taken part. If it's a big dinner, have everyone bring a dish. If you will be giving gifts, have everyone pick names out of a hat, that way no one will feel the brunt of the economy and other people's happiness on his/her shoulders.

If you are thinking homemade gifts for everyone, remember there is a time factor involved which will add pressure as the deadline approaches, not to mention the cost of the materials.

Sometimes the stress comes from the individuals that are actually getting together, whether it be personality conflicts, old sibling rivalries, or other family issues. Consider doing the cooking at your home for certain members and then visiting others, if this would save the family from turmoil.

It's funny, the holidays, so excit-

ing, beautiful, the feeling of giving and relationships nipping at everyone's coattails, well, at least that's what the movies guide you to believe! In reality, people are being arrested for fighting over that year's top toys, and everything for Christmas seems to be sold out in October!

So, in order to save yourself the stress and headaches, slow down.

Decide what you want to do and prepare. If you do see someone that looks like they have no stress, ask them how they do it. I bet it is as simple as planning and preparing, taking a deep breath, and truly feeling the meaning of the holidays. Next year, you will be the one that everyone is asking, "How do you manage the holidays, without any stress?"



### November is National Diabetes Month

Most of the food you eat is turned into sugar (glucose), for your body to use for energy. The pancreas, an organ near the stomach, produces a hormone called insulin. This hormone is necessary for the body to be able to use the sugar, which is the basic fuel for the cells in the body. When your body does not produce enough insulin and/or does not efficiently use the insulin it produces, sugar can not get into the cells, and diabetes may develop.

Low insulin levels can cause two problems: 1. Right away, the body's cells may be starved for energy, 2. Over time, high blood glucose levels may damage the eyes, kidneys, nerves or heart.

Some tips for prevention include: Make lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, eating healthy and increasing physical activity. Get checked for

diabetes if you have 2 or more of the following risk factors: if you are overweight or over the age of 45, if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, a family history of diabetes, have a history of gestational diabetes, or are African American, Asian American, Latino/Hispanic American, Native American or Pacific Islander descent.

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#### Special points of interest:

- *Holiday Stress*
- *National Awareness*
- *Pertussis*
- *Dry Skin*
- *Mononucleosis*
- *Caught Ya*
- *Fun Facts*
- *Cornbread*
- *Flu*

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## Vital Signs: Pertussis In The News

Pertussis is a respiratory disease caused by the bacteria *bordetella pertussis*. These bacteria attach to the cilia (tiny, hair-like extensions) that line part of the upper respiratory system. The bacteria release toxins, which damage the cilia and cause swelling. At first it might seem like a common cold - runny nose, fever, and cough. That's the first part. After a week or two, pertussis infection causes a thick gluey mucous and extreme coughing spells, known as coughing fits. When people have these fits, they literally cough so hard and long that they may throw up or turn blue because they can't breathe. They make a gasping "whoop" sound

when they suck in air during a fit, this is why it is known as "whooping cough".

Pertussis is highly contagious and only found in humans. It is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes while in close contact with other people, who then breathe the bacteria.

Pertussis can last up to 10 weeks and is sometimes called the 100 day cough. It is especially hard on infants and children because they seem to have more trouble coughing up the gluey mucous.

There are some ways to help prevent you and your family from contracting the disease:

1. Get vaccinated: infants and children get Dtap while teens and grown-ups get a "boost" with Tdap.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water.
3. Cover your coughs and sneezes.
4. Don't share cups and silverware.



## Common Sense: Cold Weather Equals Dry Skin



Your intact healthy skin is your body's first and best defense against infection. If you let your skin get dried out and cracked, you could be giving all sorts of nasty bacteria a way in.

There are many reasons to do something about dry, itchy skin: your looks, your health, and your sanity. Make sure that you understand the real cause of your dry skin: Is it the weather? Your medication? Or another reason? Let's take a look at the most common

cause of dry skin: winter weather! The dry winter air pulls moisture from the skin, which then tends to peel, crack, and shed excessively. The increased loss of skin cells results in increased oil and water loss, leading to more dry skin. Also, the forced hot air of indoor heating systems contributes substantially.

Here are a few tips you can try to help relieve your dry skin during the winter:

- Use a humidifier in your bedroom.
- Bundle up when you go outside with hats, scarves, and gloves.
- Wear socks that go high up on your shins.
- Use a good, thick moisturizer after your shower or bath: only pat yourself down with a towel and apply the moisturizer while your skin is still damp.
- Don't take long, hot showers. The heat dries out your skin.
- Take care of the skin on your hands and

## Ask a Nurse: What is Mononucleosis?

Mononucleosis, also called "mono," is a common viral illness that can leave you feeling tired and weak for weeks or months. Mono goes away on its own, but lots of rest and good self-care can help you feel better.

Mono is caused by the Epstein -Barr Virus (EBV). It is most often diagnosed in adolescents and young adults. Children can get the virus, but it often goes unnoticed because their symptoms are mild. Older adults usually do not get mono, because they have immunity to the virus.

Mono can spread through saliva, mucus from the nose and throat, and sometimes tears. Because the virus can be spread through kiss-

ing, it has earned the nickname the "kissing disease". If you have mono, you can avoid passing the virus to others by not kissing anyone and by not sharing things like drinking glasses, eating utensils, or toothbrushes.

Mono can be especially severe to people with immune deficiencies and has been associated with certain types of cancer.

The most common symptoms of mono are a high fever, a severe sore throat, swollen glands and tonsils, and weakness and fatigue. Symptoms usually start 4-6 weeks after you are



exposed to the virus.

Mono can cause the spleen to swell. Severe pain in the upper left part of your belly may mean that your spleen has burst. This is an emergency.

Get plenty of rest. You may need bed rest. Gargle with salt water. Keep your hands away from your mouth and nose, and keep areas clean. Take acetaminophen or ibuprofen to reduce fever. Avoid contact sports and heavy lifting, as your spleen may become enlarged, and impact or straining could cause it to burst.

## Caught-Ya-Being Good

We are still on the look out for those DJS staff members going the extra mile to make sure that everyone stays safe and healthy. Please, if you see anyone taking that extra step to ensure that the building is cleaner, or who picks up trash or removes hazards that don't even pertain to them, complete a caught ya being good form and send it to me via the email. It takes just a few minutes to complete, and it gives recognition to those that truly deserve it!

Each person nominated will be acknowledged in the next issue of the circular and each quar-

ter one person will be chosen to be the quarterly winner.

They will receive a small gift and certificate from infection control and somatic health, their picture and an article about them will be in the following circular.

So don't wait. Be on the look out and start nominating today. You can nominate as many staff members as you would like, but you can't nominate yourself!

For questions please contact Taffy Clark at DJS headquarters (410)230-3255 or by email

at [clarkt@djs.state.md.us](mailto:clarkt@djs.state.md.us).

Tilithea Jones at headquarters was our very first quarterly winner.

Check out the archives of the IBulletin to see her picture and the article all about her.



*Caught Ya Being Good*

## November Fun Facts and Interesting Science Facts

- Thanksgiving was first celebrated in the U.S. in 1789.
- The birthstone for November is Topaz.
- John F. Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963.
- Lincoln's Gettysburg address was given in November 1863.
- 100 years ago: The first virus was found in both plants and animals. Tobacco Mosaic Virus.
- The world's largest amphibian is the giant salamander. It can grow up to 5 ft. in length.
- The smallest bone in the human body is the stapes or stirrup bone located in the middle ear. It is approximately .11 inches (.28cm) long.
- The human eye blinks an average of 4,200,000 times a year.
- 40-50% of body heat can be lost through the head (no hat) as a result of its exten-

*The most dangerous animal in the world is the common housefly.*

*Because of their habits of visiting animal waste, they transmit more diseases than any other animal.*

sive circulatory network.

- It takes approximately 12 hours for food to entirely digest.

## Healthy Recipe: Corn is the Food of the Month For November

Healthy Cornbread:

Ingredients:

- 1 cup unbleached flour.
- 1 cup cornmeal.
- 1/4 cup white sugar.
- 1 teaspoon baking soda.
- 3/4 teaspoon salt.

- 1 cup plain nonfat yogurt.
- 2 eggs, beaten.

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly grease an 8x8 inch baking pan.
2. In a large bowl, mix flour, cornmeal, sugar, soda and salt. Stir in yogurt and



eggs. Do not cover mix, stir only until well blended. Pour batter into prepared pan.

3. Bake in preheated oven for 20 to 25 minutes, or until center of the bread springs back when gently pressed.

12 Servings.

Calories per serving: 118.

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*KEEP THE BEAT ALIVE!*



### *Food For Thought*

*Just Some Tips, Because It Is Still Flu Season!*

- ◇ *Get vaccinated! This is the number one way to prevent getting and spreading the flu.*
- ◇ *Cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze. Use your sleeve or a disposable tissue.*
- ◇ *Wash your hands.*
- ◇ *Clean high touch surfaces frequently. Like door-knobs, keyboards, telephones, etc.*
- ◇ *Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.*
- ◇ *Stay home if you are sick!*



## About the Season: Autumn Allergies and Asthma

People who have fall allergies and asthma problems often feel worse during late summer and early autumn months. And some people deal with them year round. Common fall allergy and asthma symptoms can include:

- Sneezing.
- Nasal stuffiness.
- Runny nose.
- Itchy, watery, burning eyes.
- Itchy mouth or throat.
- Wheezing.
- Coughing.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Tight feeling in the chest.

Kids with asthma and allergies may also have what is known as the allergic salute, where they rub their noses upward because of itching

often leaving a permanent crease across the nose and have allergic shiners, which are dark circles under the eyes caused by nasal congestion.

When summer starts to wind down, harvest time begins and autumn leaves begin to change color and fall to the ground, chances are that fall allergy and asthma challenges are about to begin. The most common early fall allergens, or triggers, are weed pollens, such as ragweed. Toward the end of summer, around mid-August in most of the U.S., weed pollen levels start to rise. They are at their highest levels during the late summer and fall. Another type of allergen that is most active during the fall (although they can begin in late summer) are mold spores.

If you notice that your allergy and asthma symptoms crop up or worsen during the fall, there's a good chance that you have fall allergies. Check with your doctor to make sure.

The following are some helpful tips to help you manage your allergies and asthma during the fall:

- Pay attention to the pollen and mold counts in your area. When the counts are high, stay inside as much as you can.
- When you're indoors or in the car, keep the windows closed and air-conditioning on, even when it is not too hot out.
- Make sure that you take your asthma and allergy medications as prescribed.
- After checking with your physician you may be able to treat some of your symptoms with over-the-counter medications.

